

Amendments to the Specification

Please amend the abstract as follows:

The invention relates to a A bearing arrangement for absorbing axial loads, comprising which has a plurality of axial roller bearings arranged one behind the other and each having a housing plate (1.1, 1.2, 1.3), a shaft plate (2.1, 2.2) and rolling body sets (3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4) arranged between these runner plates. In each case, the shaft plates (2.1, 2.2) and the housing plates (1.1, 1.2, 1.3) being are supported axially by means of spacer rings (5.1, 4.1, 4.2) arranged between them in each case. The invention is distinguished in that the The housing plates (1.1, 1.2, 1.3) and the shaft plates (2.1, 2.2) have a constant axial thickness over their entire radial extent in the region of the rolling body sets (3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4), and at least one of the shaft plates (2.1, 2.2) is provided has an annular clearance at its inner circumference with an annular clearance (6) which is inwardly open in the radial direction.

Please amend the specification as follows:

On page 3, first full paragraph, starting at line 6:

According to the invention, this object is achieved as claimed in the characterizing part of claim 1 in conjunction with its preamble in that a bearing arrangement for absorbing axial loads, comprises a plurality of axial roller bearings arranged one behind the other; housing plates; and a shaft plates, the axial roller bearings forming rolling body sets arranged between the housing plates and the shaft plates, the shaft plates and the housing plates being supported axially by means of spacer rings arranged between each of the shaft plates and each of the housing rings, wherein the housing plates and the shaft plates

have a constant axial thickness over their entire radial extent in the region of the rolling body sets, and at least one of the shaft plates is provided at its inner circumference with an annular clearance which is inwardly open in the radial direction.

On page 4, third full paragraph, starting at line 13:

Accordingly, ~~according to claim 2~~, the lower shaft plate is to be provided with an annular clearance, while ~~according to claim 3~~, the upper shaft plate should have this clearance.

On page 5, first full paragraph, starting at line 3:

A further significant feature of the bearing arrangement ~~according to the invention is described in claim 4. According to this, it is provided that the bearing ring has a securing~~ ring is provided at least in one of the clearances. Said securing ring prevents excessive deformation or even fracture of the shaft plate as would otherwise be caused by an excessive force acting on it. The system is thus significantly stiffer since the securing ring can absorb an additional part of the active force by means of deformation, without damage occurring to the shaft plate. It should be noted, as is the case with the annular clearance, that the securing ring must be designed individually for each application. This relates for example to the material used which, according to claim 5, should be elastic. However, the size and the cross-sectional shape of the securing ring also have an effect on the stiffness of the shaft plate.

On page 5, second full paragraph, starting at line 17:

Finally, a last feature ~~according to claim 6~~ provides that the securing ring should have a slot. This is necessary primarily for facilitating assembly.